

LEAFSPOT OF GARDENIA

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Leafspot of Gardenia is caused by the bacterium *Xanthomonas maculifoliigardeniae* (Ark) Elrod and Braun. It was reported for the first time from California in 1946 on greenhouse-grown gardenia plants. High humidity and temperatures in greenhouses where gardenia plants are forced into bloom are conducive to the development of the pathogen. The disease does not reach serious proportions in plants grown outdoors, although it may appear suddenly during warm and rainy summer weather.

SYMPTOMS. On the new tender leaves small, yellow dots appear, which gradually enlarge and become reddish brown and necrotic in the center. Several spots may coalesce and produce larger necrotic areas. Heavily infected leaves usually turn yellow and drop prematurely (Fig. 1.).

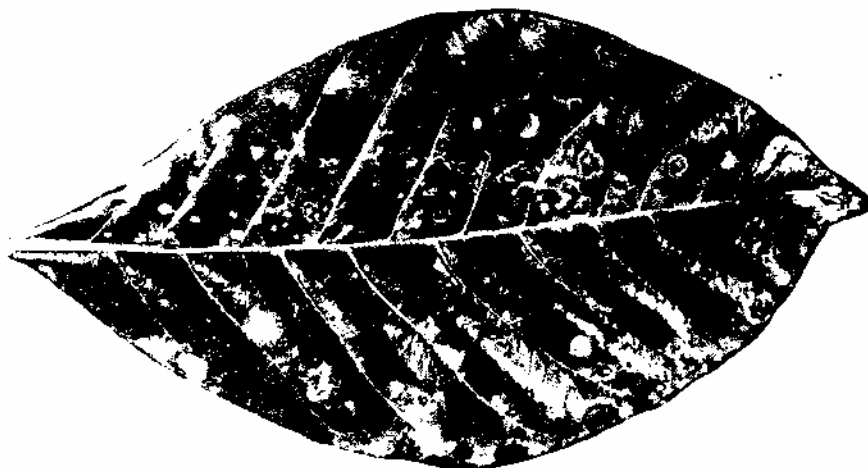


Fig. 1. Gardenia leaf with symptoms of bacterial leafspot.

CONTROL. During periods of dry weather the disease is checked and new leaves remain healthy. Overhead watering or syringing should be avoided since the bacterium is spread by these means, resulting in greater disease incidence. In extreme cases, 2 or 3 applications of streptomycin at weekly intervals will help control the disease.

References

1. Ark, P.A. and J.T. Barrett. 1946. A new bacterial leaf spot of greenhouse-grown gardenias. *Phytopathology* 36:865-868.
2. Forsberg, J. L. 1963. Diseases of ornamental plants. Univ. of Illinois Coll. of Agr. Special Pub. No. 3. 208 p.